

Amendments to the Specification:

Page 4, line 7, amend the paragraph as follows:

The present invention provides a method and system for dispensing and evidencing indicia by an indicia generating device in a system having a plurality of indicia generating devices that have been divided into n groups. Each of the indicia generating devices generates and prints indicia on a media that is to be received at a plurality of establishments, wherein the establishments are associated with different geographic designations. The method and system include receiving a plurality of verification keys, wherein each one of the received verification keys is encrypted as a function of a respective geographic designation. A plurality of key IDs are also received, where each one of the key IDs is associated with ~~on one~~ of the verification keys and is encrypted as a function of the same geographic designation used to encrypt the corresponding verification key. In response to receiving a request to generate an indicium for a media destined for a particular one of the establishments, the indicia generating device evidences the indicium by generating one of the verification keys and the corresponding key ID assigned to indicia generating device's group based on the geographic designation associated with the particular establishment, and using the generated verification key to create a digital signature, and digitally signing the indicia by including the digital signature and the generated key ID in the indicia.

Page 14, line 3, replace the paragraph with the following:

Another advantage is that since the PGD 14 encrypts the key ID and sends the key ID along with the verification key on the postage indicia, even if a perpetrator were to crack a verification key, the perpetrator would still have a problem identifying which verification

key was obtained. In order to forge the indicia, the perpetrator must possess the secret key that the PGD 14 used to compute the key ID, and the verification key itself. This means that the perpetrator must possess two secret keys rather than one in order to forge the postage indicia.

In the Abstract

A method and system for dispensing and evidencing indicia by an indicia generating device is disclosed in a system having a plurality of indicia generating devices that have been divided into n groups. Each of the indicia generating devices generates and prints indicia on a media that is to be received at a plurality of establishments, wherein the establishments are associated with different geographic designations. The method and system include receiving a plurality of verification keys, wherein each one of the received verification keys is encrypted as a function of a respective geographic designation. A plurality of key IDs are also received, where each one of the key IDs is associated with ~~on~~ one of the verification keys and is encrypted as a function of the same geographic designation used to encrypt the corresponding verification key. In response to receiving a request to generate an indicium for a media destined for a particular one of the establishments, the indicia generating device evidences the indicium by generating one of the verification keys and the corresponding key ID assigned to indicia generating device's group based on the geographic designation associated with the particular establishment, and using the generated verification key to create a digital signature, and digitally signing the indicia by including the digital signature and the generated key ID in the indicia.